

## 17. Making Satisfactory Progress (MSP)

State policy requires the assignment of participation hours to CalWORKs clients based on three factors:

- The number of parents or caretaker relatives included in the AU
- The age of the child(ren) in the AU, and
- The basis for deprivation (unemployment or incapacity) of the child(ren) in the determination of eligibility to two-parent AUs.

[Refer to “Households with Two Adults,” page 1-16] for additional information for participation requirements for various two-parent/adult scenarios.]

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### 17.1 Determining Satisfactory Progress

Employment Counselors (EC) must consider the following when determining if a WTW participant is making satisfactory progress:

- Ensure WTW participants clearly understand satisfactory progress standards. Check to see if learning or medical issues exist that are contributing to participants' lack of satisfactory progress and take appropriate action to assist the participant. The EC should not sanction the participant for lack of satisfactory progress when learning or medical issues exist. The EC should review the case to see whether a WTW plan modification is needed or if an exemption or good cause applies.
- If a learning disability is suspected, offer a learning disability screening and explain the benefits of a learning disability evaluation to the WTW participant.
- Discuss with the participant whether he or she is aware of barriers that hamper his or her ability to maintain satisfactory progress within their assigned activity. If so, assist with needed barrier removal services or WTW plan modifications.
- When a potential failure to make satisfactory progress exists, the EC should engage the WTW participant to assess whether additional resources are needed or an alternate activity is required. Revise the WTW plan to reassign the participant to a more suitable activity based upon identified strengths of the participant.
- When applicable, and if appropriate, with the permission of the participant, obtain input from the work site supervisor or school counselor regarding suggestions or options that may enhance the likelihood of the participant's success.

**Example:**

Jane works for a small graphics art business where 75 percent of her time is spent typing. She has very good attendance and work effort. Despite additional typing training, Jane is unable to type 65 words per minute (WPM) as the job requires. As a result, she is laid off by her employer. Although she is considered to not have made satisfactory progress, this would not trigger the non-compliance process. The EC would reassess Jane's skill set and abilities to see what appropriate activity she should be assigned to help her become successful.

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## 17.2 Participation in Welfare-to-Work Activities

### 17.2.1 Attendance and Participation Requirements

As a result of the Federal Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) of 2005, more emphasis has been placed on the Work Participation Rate (WPR). This added emphasis has brought about additional instructions from the federal government and the state regarding attendance and weekly hours of participation required of each CalWORKs Employment Services (CWES) program client.

The Work Verification Plan (WVP) approved by the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) on September 25, 2007 (effective October 1, 2007) provides additional guidance to states regarding attendance and participation requirements under DRA.

For unpaid work activities, the maximum number of hours of combined excused absences and holidays in any given month, for each work-eligible individual, is 16 hours. The county will not receive WPR credit for participation when a client exceeds the maximum allowable monthly hours for excused absences/holidays.

For paid work activities, where a participant is paid for the hours of an absence from that activity such as a paid holiday, paid vacation, or paid sick leave, the actual paid hours are countable as participation.

CWES clients are required to demonstrate that they are Making Satisfactory Progress (MSP) in their approved Welfare-to-Work (WTW) activity(ies). This includes regular attendance and steady progress based on the service provider's performance requirement for unpaid activities. Progress is measured by the 20/30/35 weekly hourly requirement.

The EC and Service Provider must work together to monitor the client's progress and participation and that program requirements are met. The Employment Counselor (EC) and Eligibility Workers (EWs) must work together to share information regarding new employments to capture as much information as possible to ensure that the county meets the Work Participation Rate (WPR).

In order to achieve the required hours of participation, which now mirror the federal hourly requirements, clients are required to attend assigned activities on the WTW Plan Activity Assignment (WTW2) as follows for time not count towards WTW 24-Month Time Clock:

- 20 hours/week for a one-parent AU with a child less than six years old, of which 20 hours must meet core requirement (activity/hours);
- 30 hours/week for a one-parent AU, of which 20 hours must meet core requirement;
- 35 hours/week for a two-parent AU, of which 30 hours must meet core (both parents may share the hours).

## Two-Parent Assistance Units (AU)

Unless exempt from participation, in order for adults in a two-parent AU to meet the Federal WPR Two-Parent and the All-Families WPR requirements, ALL of the following conditions must be met:

- To meet the Two-parent rate, the AU must have a combined total average of 35 hours per week, of which 30 hours must meet core. The 30 core hours may be split between both parents.
- To meet the All-Family rate, one of the two parents in the AU must participate an average of at least 30 hours, of which 20 must meet core.
- To meet both rates, the AU must have a combined total weekly average of 35 hours, of which 30 must meet core and one of the two parents must participate a weekly average of 30 hours of which 20 must meet core.

### 17.2.2 CalWORKs Federal Standards

CalWORKs requirements differ in that there is no longer a core requirement within the WTW 24-Month time-limited activities. However, by following the existing flow process when developing WTW Plans, clients will make the best of their time because their WTW 24-Month Clock will not be triggered. Any month in which the family meets Federal participation requirements (core hours/activities), which are achieved by following the existing flow process, will not count towards the WTW 24-month limit. In the event the client exhausts the WTW 24-month time limit, and the client has time remaining on the CalWORKs 48-month time on aid, the client will be required to meet Federal work participation requirements, unless he/she meets a criteria that stops or extends the time limit. Failure to then meet Federal work participation requirements may affect the cash aid amount.



#### Note:

Non-compliance will not be initiated if a participant is not meeting the core requirements during the WTW 24-Month time limited activities as long as they are meeting the CalWORKs hourly requirement of 20/30/35 hours per week.

Activities must be assigned during any semester, vacation or other break period. This may require the clients to be assigned to another provider at a different location during these temporary break periods or when clients are waiting to start a new WTW activity.

[Refer to “WTW 24-Month Time Limit,” page 1-1] for additional information regarding participation requirements under CalWORKs federal standards, federal WPR and WTW 24-month time limit.]

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## 17.3 Paid WTW Activities

### 17.3.1 Definition of Paid WTW Activities

Paid WTW activities are defined as:

- Subsidized employment (paid work study, paid OJT, paid internship and paid externship)
- Unsubsidized employment



**Note:**

Subsidized and unsubsidized employment is countable towards the weekly hours of participation

### 17.3.2 Employer Verification of Employment

Employer verification includes any of the following methods:

- SCD 1755A (signed off by the employer)
- Pay stubs
- “Request for Employment Information” (SCD 549-A)
- “Request for Information on Termination of Employment” (SCD 549-B)
- The Work Number
- Employer phone verification
- Any other designated source that is approved by a unit supervisor.

### 17.3.3 Countable Hours for Paid WTW Activities

Countable hours of WTW activities entered as part of attendance hours include:

- Employer’s holidays
- Paid leave
- Planned work shutdown periods.

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## 17.4 Unpaid WTW Activities

### 17.4.1 Definition of Unpaid WTW Activities

Unpaid WTW activities are defined as:

- Vocational Training
- Adult Basic Education (ABE)
- General Education (GED)
- English-as-a-Second Language (ESL)
- Work Experience (WEX)
- Community Service (CS)
- Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment
- Education Directly Related to Employment
- Job Search and Job Readiness Assistance (Part-Time Job Search, and Supervised Job Search)
- Unsupervised Study Time (includes homework time)

### 17.4.2 Verifying Hours for Unpaid WTW Activities

The SCD 1755A is completed by the client and submitted to the service provider(s) for review and sign-off before it is submitted to the assigned case manager. With the exception of Self-Employment, the assigned case manager reviews the SCD 1755A for completion and enters the actual weekly hours of participation into CalWIN Attendance window.



#### Reminder:

For Self-Employment, actual hours are entered until required to increase earnings. After the one year period to increase earnings, use calculated hours.

### 17.4.3 Countable Hours for Unpaid WTW Activities

Each month, attendance hours are reported by the client on the SCD 1755A and entered into the CalWIN Attendance window. Countable hours of unpaid WTW activities that are entered as part of attendance hours include the following:

- The maximum number of hours of combined excused absences and holidays in any given month, for each work-eligible individual, is 16 hours per month. Excused absences could be for the following reasons:
  - Other Non-Approved state holidays

- Temporary illness of the client
  - Attending to the illness of a client's family member
  - Job interviews
  - County approved meetings
  - Appointments (e.g. medical, school, counseling, housing or legal)
  - Providing child care when not available
  - Transportation problems
  - Family emergency
  - School breaks up to 16 hours per month.
- Unsupervised study time cannot exceed one hour for each hour of class time and is to be documented recorded on the SCD 1755A, as self certified by WTW participant.
  - Actual hours of supervised study time that is documented and verified by the service provider. Documentation of hours of participation is to be recorded on the SCD 1755A.
  - Supervised study time conducted at the library, Employment Connection Centers, school labs, Work to Future Centers, or other approved methods. Documentation of hours of participation is to be recorded on a SCD 1755A.
  - Make up hours in the same month at Employment Connection Centers, school labs, libraries or Work to Future Centers.

## Excused Absences

A client may be absent for more than 16 hours per month for good cause; however, only a maximum of 16 hours can be counted monthly as excused absences per federal WPR requirements.

The client must indicate the reason for the absence on the SCD 1755A. The EC must record the absences in CalWIN as follows:

- A maximum of 16 hours/month in the **Excused Absences** field,
- If the excused absence exceeds 16 hours/month, document the excused absence in **Case Comments**.

- For hours that are unexcused, input the hours in the **Unexcused Absences** field. Excused absences that exceed 16 hours per month are not to be recorded in either CalWIN field but is documented in case comments.

#### 17.4.4 Ten State Approved Holidays for Unpaid WTW Activities

The following are the ten state approved holidays, which count towards the combined 16 monthly hours of holiday/excused absences:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday
- President's Day (Washington's Birthday)
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day.

In order to count holiday time as actual countable hours of participation, the individual must have been scheduled to participate in the activity for the holiday. The EC must record the number of holiday hours in the **Holiday Hours** field in the [Attendance] tab in CalWIN.



#### Note:

Other holidays that are not approved, such as Columbus Day and Cesar Chavez must be recorded as excused absences and/or good cause when the maximum excused absences has been recorded.

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## 17.5 Progress Report

### 17.5.1 Service Providers

Services Providers who have daily contact with clients will closely monitor Making Satisfactory Progress (MSP) to ensure that CWES students benefit from employment and training activities.

Service Providers are required to maintain attendance and participation records at their sites. Providers will report the status of the client's participation to the EC. Attendance hours will be entered by the EC.

Service Providers monitor client's progress and notifies the assigned EC as soon as the issue is discovered as such when the participant is not making satisfactory progress or not meeting participation

requirements by completing and forwarding via email the “Participation Problem and Attendance Alert” for SCD 1766.



**Note:**

At the conclusion of meeting with the participant to discuss participation issues, the EC completes section D within 3 working days to provide the outcome of the interview which outlines the steps which may resolve the participation problem; referral to other WTW activities and/or initiation of the non-compliance process.

In addition, Service Providers must review and take into consideration the client’s progress in the current activity(ies) when developing Welfare-to-Work (WTW) plans, which includes outcomes from case conferences that addressed participation problems. [Refer to Welfare-to-Work (WTW) Plan, page 9-1.]

### **Release of Information (SCD 1029)**

The “Release of Information” (SCD 1029) can be completed and forwarded to the service provider to obtain information, such as participation and attendance hours for students enrolled in private schools, or other providers where there is no CWES liaison/representative.

## **17.5.2 Job Search Services Progress Reporting**

Progress is based on attendance and job search. This will be monitored by the assigned Employment Connection Center (ECC) Employment Counselor (EC). Job Search (networking & workshops) verification tracking by the Employment Connection Center must be completed weekly for the client and entered in the SCD 1755A. The ECC EC will not sign off on these forms until they are satisfied with the completion or progress. Clients will be expected to complete activities indicated on their weekly job search plan. These plans will be prepared by them and assigned ECC EC. Each plan will be individually tailored to the client depending on factors such as experience, special needs, skills, knowledge and ability.

When the client is not making satisfactory progress the Employment Connection staff will notify the case manager.

## **17.5.3 Colleges/Universities/Private Schools**

The following guidelines must be applied to monitor a participant’s academic progress while enrolled in a college either as a SIP or as a result of a Post Assessment WTW Plan:

- Be enrolled a minimum of 6 units per semester or quarter,
- Pass each course with a grade of “C” or a “Pass” for any pass/fail course,



- Maintain a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0 or better,
- Or have earned a GPA of 2.0 in the previous semester or quarter,
- Submit a copy of the grade report at the end of each semester or quarter to the assigned EC.

## Attendance

Both the college liaison and the assigned EC must monitor the participant's attendance during the semester or quarter term by:

- Verifying that the participant is still enrolled in the courses approved,
- Reporting any drop in units,
- Reporting any unexcused absences that exceed one week of class meetings or 10% of total hours the class meets per term.



### Note:

The client is responsible to submit the "Attendance Verification" (SCD 1755A) to self-certify attendance when non-contracted schools do not provide verification.

## Participation Problem and Attendance Alert

The college liaison is required to alert the assigned EC of any participation problems as soon as the issue is discovered. The college liaison and the assigned EC are responsible to work together to identify and resolve any barriers that would assist the participant in improving academic progress. An outcome of this collaborative action may include participant referral to other WTW activities/providers. The college liaison will notify the assigned EC when a participant:

- Drops below 6 units,
- Cumulative or most recent GPA falls below a 2.0,
- Will be placed on or is on Academic Probation or Academic Progress Probation,



### Note:

Any related information that reflects that the participant is not making satisfactory progress must be reported by the college liaison.

The college liaison and the participant are required to forward a copy of the grade report to the assigned EC at the end of each term. The college liaison will notify the assigned EC of any participation

problems by completing and emailing the “Participation Problem and Attendance Alert”, form SCD1766. Upon receipt of the SCD1766, the assigned EC is to contact the participant by phone or through a face-to-face conference to discuss and review the PPA. Upon completion of the phone or face-to-face interview, the EC completes Section D of the SCD 1766 and via email returns form to the college liaison within 3 working days. Section D will include the outcome of the interview which outlines the steps which may improve academic progress; referral to other WTW activities and/or initiation of the non-compliance process.

Most colleges post grades online for participant to access.

Although the PPA does not apply to non-contracted schools, the EC is responsible to follow-up with the client for any participation problem.

### 17.5.4 Adult Education Sites

When monitoring a participant’s academic progress while enrolled in an Adult Education Program either as a SIP or as a result of a Post Assessment WTW Plan, the site representative must:

- Inform the assigned EC after the first 30 days of enrollment via email the participant’s progress and attendance,
- Obtain two progress reports for each participant to be completed by the Adult Education instructor utilizing the “Progress Report and Recommendation” form SCD 1768A twice per year due November 1 and May 1,
- Review each progress report and if any participation problems have been reported by the instructor, completes the SCD1766 and emails the alert to the assigned EC.

The assigned EC will review the participation problem alert with the participant by phone or through a face-to-face conference. Upon completion of the conference, the EC will complete section D of the SCD 1766 and via email returns the form to the Adult Education Representative. Section D will include the outcome of the interview which outlines the steps that may resolve the participation problem; referral to other WTW activities and/or initiation of the non-compliance process.

#### **Progress Report and Recommendation” (SCD 1768A)**

The SCD 1768A is a standard internal report that remains with the school and is used by all adult education schools for the instructor to report progress to the school representative; the representative then completes the PPA when there are any problems.

#### **Attendance**

Both the Adult Education and the assigned EC must monitor the participant’s attendance for the duration of the Adult Education Program each month. Two or more unexcused absences per month is considered a participation problem.

## Participation Problem and Attendance Alert

The Adult Education Representative is required to alert the assigned EC of any participation problems by completing and emailing the SCD 1766 to the assigned EC as soon as the issue is discovered. The Adult Education Representative and the assigned EC are responsible to work together to identify and resolve any barriers that would assist the participant in improving progress and attendance. An outcome of this collaborative action may include participant referral to other WTW activities/providers. The Adult Education Representative will notify the assigned EC when a participant:

- Is absent more than 10% per month or two unexcused absences in one month,
- Fails to make satisfactory progress as reported on the PPA,



### Note:

Any related information that reflects that the participant is not making satisfactory progress must be reported by the adult education representative.

Upon receipt of the SCD 1766, the assigned EC will review the participation problem alert with the participant by phone or through a face-to face conference. Upon completion of the conference, the EC completes Section D of the SCD 1766 and via email returns the form to the Adult Education Representative within 3 working days. Section D includes the outcome of the interview which outlines the steps that may resolve the participation problem; referral to other WTW activities and/or initiation of the non-compliance process.

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## 17.6 Other Attendance Monitoring

### 17.6.1 Rule

On a monthly basis the EC will be responsible for monitoring attendance on the “Attendance Verification” (SCD 1755A) and entering the attendance hours in CalWIN. If attendance does not meet the required hours, the EC must take corrective action.

### 17.6.2 Due Date

The “Attendance Verification” (SCD 1755A) and “Child Care Billing” (SCD 1755B) are due by the 5th day of the month.

### 17.6.3 Completion of “Attendance Verification” (SCD 1755A)

Completion of the “Attendance Verification” (SCD 1755A) requires that:

- Clients enter hours attended and zero hours for days not attended on the SCD 1755A and state the reason for the absence on the form.
- The EC reviews the SCD 1755A to determine which absence(s) to count as excused/unexcused and include in the appropriate CalWIN [Attendance] window fields.
- The EC documents the hours that are being counted towards a holiday on the SCD 1755A and initial/date, and input the hours in the appropriate CalWIN [Attendance] window fields.
- WTW participants enrolled in school and using unsupervised study time will need to add this activity to a separate column on their “Attendance Verification” (SCD 1755A) along with the school activity, and any other activity.
- Hours of participation in an approved school program that are part of distance learning/on-line instruction are to be entered on the SCD 1755A.



**Reminder:**

Excused absences are no longer included as part of the total hours of participation for the activity in CalWIN. All absences are recorded in the *Excused Absence*, *Unexcused Absence*, or *Holiday* fields.

**17.6.4 Forms Used for Monitoring Attendance**

When monitoring progress and attendance, the following forms are used:

Who	Form #	Title
All Cases	SCD 1755A	“Attendance Verification”
All Cases	SCD 1766	“Participation and Attendance Alert”
Community College and Private Schools	N/A	Report Cards - school status report such as dropped classes or school withdrawal

**17.6.5 “Attendance and Excused Absence Requirements Informing Notice” (SCD 53)**

The “Attendance and Excused Absence Requirements Informing Notice” (SCD 53) is used to inform clients of the attendance and excused policy that applies to participation in WTW activities. This new notice is to be provided to all new CWES clients or when needed to remind problem clients of attendance requirements.

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## 17.7 Documentation of Verified Attendance Hours

The SCD 1755A must be reviewed for accuracy and completeness. Any adjustments to the SCD 1755A MUST be noted, initialed by the worker and dated on the SCD 1755A prior to entering the hours of participation into CalWIN and submitting the form to the Integrated Document Management (IDM) station for scanning.

All explanations for excused absences and state holidays must be included by the assigned Case Manager EC in the weekly totals, noted on the SCD 1755A, and in CalWIN's **Attendance** window and in **Maintain Case Comments**.

The following guidelines apply to entering hours of participation into CalWIN:

- Hours of attendance reported on the SCD 1755A must be entered into CalWIN by the 10th working day of each month,
- Any hours during the week that are determined to be an approved holiday,
- Any hours during the week that are determined to be an excused absence, not to exceed the 16 hours per month maximum.

The following guidelines apply to selecting drop-down values for verification **Source** in the [Attendance] tab:

- *Attendance Sheet* is selected when the SCD 1755A and/or SCD 1756 is submitted along with any documentation,
- *SAR 7* is selected when the periodic report, Semi-Annual Report (SAR 7), along with the pay stub, is verified in IDM.
- *Pay Stub* is selected when the pay stub is received with no attendance sheet,
- *Employer Statement* is selected when a documented phone contact with the employer is made or another form of verification other than pay stub/attendance sheet is received such as but not limited to the "Request for Employment Information (SCD 549A) or "Request for "Request for Information on Termination of Employment" (SCD 549B).
- *Provider Verification* is selected for unpaid work activities, such as verification of school attendance, Job Search/Job Readiness activities, or other appropriate verification for a non-paid activity is received, and when attendance report is not received.

### 17.7.1 Pay Check Stubs

Employment verification, such as pay check stubs, are not required to be submitted monthly to verify attendance for paid employment activities; however, they are required to pay child care. Hours of participation in employment related activities may be verified through other sources such as through IDM or earnings information in CalWIN's Data Collection. Per federal WPR rules, when pay check stubs from prior months are used to verify WTW participation for future months, this type of verification process is referred to as projection, and has been incorporated into county policy for employment activities.

When projecting hours, the hours from pay check stubs from the most recent SAR 7 available in IDM, or CalWIN's earnings information in **Data Collection**, may be used to verify monthly attendance in paid employment activities for the future six months. When pay check stubs do not include hours worked, but they include the hourly wage and income, hours worked may be computed by dividing the total income by the hourly wage.

**Example:** Pay check stub shows \$1,500 in income and hourly wage shows \$10.50/hour. Divide \$1,500 by \$10.50 and the amount represents 143 hours.

#### SAR 7 Projection Example

October SAR 7 is due in November and reflects 135 hours worked in October. Client does not turn in SCD 1755A for December. The calculation for obtaining the average is divide 135 hours by 4.33 weeks and the total equals 31 weekly hours of participation to verify weekly participation for the six future months beginning with the month after the month SAR 7 is due (December, January, February, March, April and May).

#### Attendance Tab

The projected or actual hours are to be entered into the [Attendance] window in CalWIN. The activity status is also to be updated to "Satisfactory Progress."

### 17.7.2 Entering hours

When entering hours in the [Attendance] tab for any WTW activity, enter hours weekly. Entering weekly hours functions with the WTW 24-Month Time Clock automation when adjusting time retroactively. [Refer to "Plans Not Scheduled to Meet," page 1-14] for additional information.]

### 17.7.3 Case Comments

The EC will document how the hour computation was derived from pay check stubs (whether actual hours or projected hours used) by entering case comments using the **Attendance Report Processing** case comments drop down type.

**Example:** “February SAR 7 reflects 135 hours of paid employment, which was used to verify 31 weekly hours (135/4.33) of WTW participation in FTE activity for April.”

The Attendance Report Processing case comments type is also to be used for calculation of attendance hours for any other activity.

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## 17.8 Attendance Problems

### 17.8.1 Supportive Services

Supportive services cannot be withheld in order to obtain verification of the required hours in approved activities or verification of satisfactory progress, including receipt of any attendance verification. If it is determined that a client has failed or refused to comply with any program requirements, the EC must initiate the non-compliance procedures to make a cause determination. As part of this process, a timely Notice of Action (NOA) must also be sent prior to stopping or reducing supportive services, clearly stating which supportive services are being reduced or discontinued and the reason for the reduction or discontinuance. The NOA must be mailed at least 10 days prior to the date the supportive services will stop or be reduced.

### 17.8.2 Non-Compliance

If the client fails to meet participation requirements or not meeting MSP, the EC is required to initiate Non-Compliance and conduct a cause determination. [Refer to [\[Refer to “Non-Compliance Process,” page 36-1\]](#) of the CWES Handbook for process.]

